

# General Information

The nature center, operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation, provides programs that relate to the protection and management of Missouri's fish, forests and wildlife. All interpretive programs are conducted by experienced naturalists and provide alternative learning experiences.

The center is just east of the intersection of Interstate 55 (Exit 99) and Kingshighway (State Highway 61) within Cape Girardeau's County Park North. It is open Tuesday through Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free.

## What To Expect

The nature center has an auditorium, classrooms, a scientific research lab, freshwater aquariums and opportunities for wildlife viewing. Hands-on exhibits for all ages allow exploration of the natural communities found in southeast Missouri—forest, marsh, swamp and river habitats. Visitors also can learn about Native American artifacts and primitive tools used to harvest plants and animals. Two miles of nature trails traverse the White Oak Trace featuring rolling river hills with sinkholes, deep hollows and ravines covered with prominent stands of poplar and oak.

## To Make Your Trip More Enjoyable

- Keep your group small. Assign group leaders and divide larger groups into smaller units for exploration.
- Leaders should visit the area and prepare

- their students before they visit. Determine travel time to the nature center, and share information with all the adult leaders.
- Explain the rules in advance, so the children know what to expect. Remind them to wear comfortable shoes and clothing suitable for the weather and outdoor activities.
  - Name tags, especially for younger students, are helpful. Make name tags in the shapes of plants and animals as a pre-trip project.
  - Arrive 15 minutes before your program. The quality and length of your program will be reduced if you are late, or it may be cancelled because many groups are scheduled back-to-back.
  - When you arrive, send a representative to check in before unloading students. Buses should park in the designated parking areas.
  - If you bring lunch, make arrangements to eat in the North County Park. Many shelters within the park grounds are available

on a first-come, first-serve basis, but they may be reserved by calling (573) 335-4146.

## Rules to Share with Your Group

- The land surrounding the nature center is a wildlife refuge. All plants and animals are protected. Do not harm animals or their homes; do not collect any natural materials including rocks, leaves, mushrooms or nuts; and do not pick plants.
- Running is prohibited on the trails and in the building.
- Stay on the trails to avoid poison ivy. While it is beneficial for wildlife, it causes unpleasant reactions in many people.
- Always walk behind the trail guide. Other classes may be using the area at the same time, so be considerate.
- Pick up all trash. Litter is unsightly and may be dangerous to visitors and wildlife.

7/2005

# Interpretive Programs for Teachers and Leaders Guide



A variety of interpretive programs create avenues for conservation awareness and education through quality indoor and outdoor experiences.



Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus Nature Center  
2289 County Park Drive  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701



Serving nature and you

## CAPE GIRARDEAU CONSERVATION CAMPUS NATURE CENTER

...a special place to explore and experience the diversity of southeast Missouri.

PRSR STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
JEFFERSON CITY, MO  
PERMIT 274



# Reservation Guidelines

- To arrange your program, call (573) 290-5218. Reservations are taken on a first-come basis. Schedule naturalist-guided programs at least two weeks in advance. Field trips in the spring may require advanced reservation of up to six months. A 24-hour notice of cancellation is requested.
- Programs may be scheduled Tuesday through Friday on the hour for groups of 10 or more participants. Groups are limited to one program topic per visit and two naturalist-guided programs per year. Registration for the following calendar year begins Sept. 15.
- The center requires a minimum of one adult to supervise 10 children, and additional adults for groups with younger children or special needs may be recommended. Adult escorts should remain

- with the group at all times and are responsible for group management. Let us know in advance if members of the group have special needs such as learning or physical challenges.
- After your reservation has been made, a confirmation letter will be mailed to you approximately two weeks before your visit. Please call the nature center staff immediately if this schedule needs to be changed.
  - If you are unable to schedule a guided program, your group is welcome to visit any time during our regular business hours. We ask that all groups pre-register before visiting the nature center. We like to know how many are using the area and your estimated time of arrival.



# Preschool

All preschool programs last one hour. If weather permits, groups spend approximately half of the time outdoors. Preschool groups are limited to no more than 20 participants who must be at least 3 years old.

## Super Seeds

Hitchhiking? Skydiving? Seeds lead adventurous lives! Learn the amazing ways seeds disperse, examine their parts, functions and life cycles, as well as their importance to humans and wildlife.

## Let’s Go Fishing

What do you need to go fishing? Start by making a fishing permit. Then learn through an interactive story about making wise choices for catching and releasing fish. Then visit the “classroom pond” and catch some fish of your own.

## Sensory Adventure

Ready for an adventure? Listen to animal calls, meet a tree, see animal signs, and feel antlers, skins or feathers as we use our senses to explore the area surrounding the nature center.

# Elementary and Secondary

All programs for grades K-12 are from one to two hours, depending on the group’s size and the amount of time spent outdoors. All standard programs are designed around Grade Level Expectations and fulfill selected Show-Me Knowledge and Performance Standards, which are listed below.

## Kindergarten through Second Grade Nature Detective

A seasonal investigation awaits! Look, listen, smell and touch! Students will use their senses to find clues that tell the “story” of wildlife living near the nature center. Knowledge: SC1, SC3, SC4, PE1 Performance: 1.6, 3.1, 3.5

## Monarch Magic

Investigate the magical life cycle of a monarch butterfly. Discover the fascinating ways butterflies change as they grow and the amazing journeys they take as adults. Knowledge: SC2, SC4, FA4 Performance: 1.4, 1.6

## Furs, Feathers and Scales

What color is your coat? Is it soft and fuzzy or smooth and sleek? Let’s take a close look at some of southeast Missouri’s animals and find similarities and differences in

them. Students will observe how different characteristics and adaptations help animals survive in various habitats. Knowledge: SC1, SC3, SC4 Performance: 1.6, 3.5

## Nature’s Neighborhoods and Niches

An animal’s niche is its “occupation” in a natural community. We’ll explore how each animal has a special “job” and how members of a natural community depend on one another. Knowledge: SC3, SC4 Performance: 1.6, 1.10, 3.8, 4.3

## Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Insect Intrigue

Learn about insects from the inside out! Explore basics of insect anatomy, life stages and their remarkable characteristics for survival. Grab an insect net and go outside to observe these fascinating creatures in their own habitats. Knowledge: SC3, SC4, SC8 Performance: 1.2, 1.4, 4.1

## Leaf It to Trees

What kind of tree is that? As we walk through the woods, we will look at different characteristics used to identify trees, and use a dichotomous key to identify some common trees found in Missouri. Knowledge: SC3, SC4 Performance: 1.2, 3.5, 4.1

## Additional Program Topics

### Reptiles and Amphibians

Alligators in Missouri? Sirens that swim? You bet! We will take a look at a few of the reptiles and amphibians that call southeast Missouri home. Knowledge: SC3, SC4, SC8 Performance: 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.7

### Mammals of Missouri

Learn fascinating facts about Missouri’s wild mammals! Many mammals make their homes in the diverse habitats that Mis-

## Tools of the Trade

Hone your primitive skills and get a glimpse of the past. Learn about tools primitive people used to survive, how they were made, natural resources that were used (animal, plant, or mineral), and how they compare to modern tools. Knowledge: SC3, SC8, SS2 Performance: 1.9

## Wetland Investigator

Leap into wetland ecology! Learn about wetland diversity, explore who eats who in the underwater food web, and discover some amazing characteristics for living in the water. Knowledge: SC1, SC3, SC4, SC7 Performance: 1.2, 4.1

## Sixth through 12th Grade Going, Going, Gone

Did you know that at one time a parakeet species lived in the wild right here in Missouri? Animals and plants are faced with perils for survival every day. Take a look at some of the threatened and endangered species found in Missouri and learn what you can do to become stewards of the environment. Knowledge: SC3, SC4, SC8, SS2, SS4, SS6 Performance: 1.10, 3.1, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.2, 4.3

## CSI: The Trace

Mysteries abound along the White Oak Trace. Students will travel along the trail in search of evidence that will help reveal who and what was involved in the wildlife mystery. By taking notes and measurements, or



using field guides and information stations, students will work together to determine who are the players of the “crime.” Knowledge: SC3, SC4, SC7, SC8, MA3, MA6 Performance: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.8, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5

## Swamps, Sloughs & Marshes

“Swampeast” Missouri comes alive as students get beneath the water’s surface and observe the rich diversity of wetland habitats of the area. Collect and classify aquatic insects, and examine the unique biological, chemical and physical attributes of wetlands. Knowledge: SC1, SC3, SC4, SC5, SC8 Performance: 1.2, 4.1

## Populations: What’s Up?

Oh Deer! Gather the herd to learn about the ups and downs of deer populations in Missouri. This activity demonstrates how wildlife populations change in response to a variety of factors. Knowledge: MA1, MA6, SC3, SC4, SC7 Performance: 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

## Who’s in Your Neighborhood?

Realize the wealth of wildlife in your backyard! From owls to opossums, wildlife can be found in even the busiest areas. Take a virtual trip through town and discover what animals share the neighborhoods and how to attract or discourage them around your neck of the woods. Knowledge: SC3, SC4, SC8 Performance: 3.5, 4.1, 4.7